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May 2024

News to Know

IMPORTANT! STATE FISCAL YEAR (FY) CLOSES JUNE 3

The State FY 2024 deadline for submission of any state and federal invoices/reimbursement requests is June 3.

- Federal Funds: Requests submitted after June 3 will be held for processing until mid-July.
- State Funds: Agencies in receipt of state FY 2024 funds (MEHTAP and STA), any unused funds after June 3 will be reallocated.

Section 5310 and 5311 Federal Funding Applications

Currently, there is no federal funding application available for the Section 5310 and 5311 programs. When applications become available, a notice will be posted in this newsletter as well as on our website at [Transit Applications and Reporting](#).

Lake of the Ozarks Community Bridge is officially toll-free

On April 30 the final toll on the Lake of the Ozarks Community Bridge was paid, earlier than originally anticipated, and maintenance responsibility was transferred to the Missouri Department of Transportation. With that final payment, there are no longer any toll roads in the state of Missouri.

Through a public-private partnership, the Community Bridge was opened to traffic on May 1, 1998, and started collecting tolls at midnight. Joe and Janelle Page were the first people in Missouri to pay that toll - they even kept the receipt. They were also the last people in Missouri to pay the toll for the Community Bridge.

The bridge is officially toll-free, and users no longer have to pay, or drive 45 minutes around, to travel across the Lake of the Ozarks from the west to east sides. Several speakers touted the huge community accomplishment and how the community bridge opened up a new corridor.

Safety spotlight

On April 9, FTA published the first major update to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASP) regulation. These updates are a part of a continuing effort to improve transit safety performance on federally supported transit systems, and PTASP is the first rule finalized by FTA under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements to make transit safer for both transit workers and passengers.

- **Federal Register Notice ([PDF Download](#))** – Read the final rule and FTA’s response to comments.
- **Markup: Changes to 49 CFR 673** – See the line-by-line changes to the PTASP rule text.
- **Markup: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law changes to 49 U.S.C § 5329(d)** – See the line-by-line changes to PTASP statutory requirements.

It incorporates Bipartisan Infrastructure law requirements, such as:

- Advancing safety management system (SMS) processes.
- Increasing frontline transit worker involvement.
- Expanding de-escalation training.
- Addressing safety risk, including assaults on transit workers, transit vehicle-pedestrian collisions, and infectious disease exposure.

FTA also published an update to the National Public Transportation Safety Plan as well as a response to comments in the Federal Register. The plan serves as FTA’s primary guidance document to improve transit safety performance. FTA updated the plan to align with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requirements and to include best practices, tools, technical assistance, voluntary standards and other resources.

- View the [National Public Transportation Safety Plan](#).

HOT Transit Topic -- Volunteer Driver Programs

Volunteer Driver Supervision

Supervision of drivers (both paid and unpaid) should include the same essential categories: orientation, training, review/evaluation, recognition, disciplinary steps and termination.

Orientation

Drivers are a sponsoring organization’s ambassadors in the community. Their professionalism and ability to convey the organization’s mission and vision to the public is important in maintaining the sponsoring organization’s reputation as providing safe and effective transportation services. If a passenger has a negative experience, they may use social media to share that experience easily throughout the community. It is important to have an effective orientation process to ensure that volunteers engaged with the organization fit well with the services they will provide. Include a discussion of the history of the organization, the unique characteristics of the riders served, and how the service provides critical access to those passengers.

Training

Drivers (both paid and unpaid) should be trained in the following topics:

- First Aid/CPR (Adult, child and infant depending on the service provided).
- Blood borne pathogens and utilizing a clean-up kit.
- Agency policies/procedures.
 - Include reporting relationships.
- Ethics (accepting tips/gifts).
- Driver safety (cell phones, seat belts).
- Emergency procedures (accidents, passenger illness during trip, etc.).

- ADA (service animals, assistive equipment).
- Drug and Alcohol program requirements (if they are subject to testing).
- Agency expectations (dress codes, picture ID, disabled parking permits, reporting accidents and tickets).
- Vehicle orientation and operations (if they are driving agency vehicles).
- Any other training that is provided to paid drivers.

Review/Evaluation

Review and evaluation of drivers (both paid and unpaid) is important for assessing progress and performance. It creates an opportunity for feedback on performance, identifies areas of training or development a driver requires, and helps management decide which drivers are meeting organization standards.

Evaluating drivers can be accomplished through direct observation and/or surveys of riders. If your agency utilizes volunteers to operate agency vehicles, conduct on-board observations at least twice per year. Document the observations and include them in their volunteer file. For volunteers operating personal vehicles, there may not be adequate space for on-board observations, so a survey is a crucial tool. A passenger survey should assure respondents that their identity will remain anonymous and clearly state the purpose of the survey. Surveys can be done through a mailed form, phone call or web link. To receive enough responses, consider randomly conducting surveys of a percentage of the individual riders served monthly. For example, if volunteers provided 200 trips in April to 20 individual riders, a survey of two riders represents 10%. Include the date of the service and the name of the driver, so the passenger provides information for a specific trip. Include questions regarding the passenger's perception of safety, professionalism of the driver, on-time performance and whether they would like to ride with the driver again. An open-ended question such as, "Please report anything else about the trip that you think is important," can elicit useful information without restriction. Be prepared to act if serious concerns are identified, including unsafe driving or drug/alcohol use while driving.

Recognition

Establish a regularly scheduled program to recognize volunteers. Recognition may include:

- Annual volunteer dinner (years of service certificates).
- A profile of the five most active volunteers in an agency newsletter.
- Gift cards (these need to be in policy and paid with non-government funds).
- An oil change at a local shop.
- A plant from a garden store.

Discipline/Termination

Occasionally, drivers must be suspended or terminated because of violations to the sponsoring organization's policies or complaints received by riders. Grounds for termination include but are not limited to:

- Any time a current driver does not meet the requirements to be a new driver.
- Theft.
- Violence.
- Reporting to work under the influence of a controlled substance, alcohol, or medications that affect driving abilities, based on the standards of the Drug Free Workplace Act.
- Reporting to work under the influence of medication that has not been reported to and approved by the sponsoring organization.
- Management may consider driving-related complaints or the need for additional training. The suggested maximum is three complaints or fewer, based on the severity of the complaints.
- Violations of the Drivers Code of Conduct.
- Suspension or loss of driver's license or insurance.
- Violation of program confidentiality or conflict of interest policies.
- Repeated collisions or a single serious collision.
- False documentation of program records.
- Violation of sponsoring organization's ethics policy.
- Violation of the sponsoring organization's harassment policy.

Reasons for Intervention

A sponsoring organization may choose an intervention program for less serious offenses than those listed above. Such offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Moving violations.
- Acquiring three points on the evaluation scale.
- Rider complaint about driving performance or rider relations abilities.
- Staff or driver observation of changes in the ability to perform essential job responsibilities.
- Improper program documentation.

Medical Restrictions

- If driving has been restricted for any medical reason, a written physician's release should be required prior to returning the volunteer to driving.

Webinar: Transit Award Management System (TrAMS) Enhancements

FTA will host a webinar at 12:30 p.m. CT on May 22 to discuss and demonstrate recent enhancements to FTA's [Transit Award Management System \(TrAMS\)](#). The enhancements are scheduled for release this week.

[TrAMS](#), a web-based grant management tool, allows FTA grant recipients to apply for federal funds and manage their programs in accordance with federal requirements. The platform also enables FTA to review, approve, control and oversee how funds are used.

Enhancements include changes to the layout, appearance and terminology specific to the records page and do not change the workflow or data within the system. The changes are necessary for FTA to stay on pace with current technology while streamlining users' experience and enhancing clarity.

TrAMS users are encouraged to [register](#) and attend to learn more about the enhancements.

Federal Actions & Updates



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

Notice of Funding Opportunities

FTA Ferry Program Joint NOFO – June 17 deadline. About \$316 million total is available for the Passenger Ferry, Low-No Ferry and Ferry Service for Rural Communities grant programs.

USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program – deadlines set by stages. About \$1.2 billion are made available for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) FY24 program to support the prevention of death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users, including public transportation.

Joint Office Clean Bus Planning Award – rolling basis deadline. The program provides free technical assistance to develop fleet electrification transition plans. Eligible applicants include direct or designated recipients of FTA grants and state entities providing bus services.

Federal Register Updates

FTA & USDOT currently have published to the Federal Register:

- **Request for Comment Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance Proposed Circular (RFC close: June 3)**

- Request for Comment [Proposed Policy Guidance for the Capital Investment Grants Program](#) (RFC close: June 4)

Upcoming Webinars & Trainings

- NTI Virtual Training: Advanced Title VI and Public Transit

Jun. 10-12 | [Register Here](#)

- NTI Self-Paced Course: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 101 Online

Self-Paced | [Register Here](#)

- FTA Training: Advancing Safety Risk Management and Safety Assurance Workshops

Virtual, June 5-6 | [Register Here](#)

- FTA's Tier II Requirements in the New DBE Rule

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 3:00– 4:30 PM EST

[Register](#)

- DBE Status After Losing Certification During Contract Performance

Wednesday, May 22, 2024 1:00– 3:00 PM EST

[Register](#)

- DBE/ACDBE Final Rule Changes: DBE Open Ended Performance Plans (OEPP) for Design-Build Contracts

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 1:00– 3:00 PM EST

[Register](#)

- Final Rule Prompt Payment and Return Retainage requirements with rollout of a Tool and Toolkit for optional use by recipients/subrecipients

Wednesday, July 24, 2024 1:00– 3:00 PM EST

[Register](#)

- Requirements for TVMs in the New DBE Rule

Tuesday, July 30, 2024 3:00– 4:30 PM EST

[Register](#)

Upcoming Reporting

July 2024

Annual Vehicle/Mileage Reporting (Section 5310/5311)

Annual Insurance Certification (Section 5310/5311)

Annual Agency Contact Update (Section 5310/5311)

Annual Ridership (METHAP/Section 5310 and Public Transportation)

Upcoming Conferences

2024 CTA Expo - June 9-12 in West Palm Beach, FL

2024 MPTA Conference - September 3-5 in St. Louis, MO

D&A Training for 5311s on Tuesday afternoon, September 3

TRAINING RESOURCES

National RTAP: <https://www.nationalrtap.org/>

Missouri RTAP: <https://mltrc.mst.edu/mortaphome/>

National Transit Institute (NTI) <https://www.ntionline.com/>

National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) <https://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/>

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA): <https://ctaa.org/>

USDOT Drug and Alcohol: <https://www.transportation.gov/odapc>

FTA Drug and Alcohol: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/drug-alcohol-program>

FMCSA Drug and Alcohol: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/drug-alcohol-testing-program>

FTA Webinars and Trainings [Homepage](#)

National Transit Institute's [Current Course Schedule](#) of Upcoming Training

FTA-Sponsored Training Courses [Homepage](#) | FTA [Safety Training Page](#) & [Enhanced Safety Trainings](#)

TSI Public Transportation [Catalogue](#) | TSI [Course Schedule PDF](#)

National RTAP [Upcoming Webinars](#)

CTAA [Training Calendar](#)

APTAU Learning [Homepage](#)

NCMM [e-Learning Catalogue](#)

Easterseals Project Action [Course Schedule](#)

Mineta Transportation Institute [Upcoming Webinars](#)

SUMC MLC [Learning Modules](#)

We want to hear from you!

InTransit Newsletter is our Monthly Transit Agency spotlight recognizing the awesome things that are happening in the organization. If you would like to submit what your agency is doing, whether it's about your service or highlighting a transit employee, please have those submission submitted to Nick Volkart at nicholas.volkart@modot.mo.gov.

Visit our Website

For additional questions or concerns:

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